

**TRUE STORIES OF GREAT  
AMERICANS; GEORGE  
ARMSTRONG CUSTER**

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True Stories of Great Americans; George Armstrong Custer by Frederick S. Dellenbaugh

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**FREDERICK S. DELLENBAUGH**

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TRUE STORIES OF GREAT AMERICANS

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GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER



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GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER

Taken by Brady just after Lee's surrender. This was Custer's favorite portrait. He is in undress uniform. The wide hat was captured from a Confederate, and the blue flannel shirt was bought from a government gunboat on the Potomac River. The necktie was scarlet, a color adopted when he was made a brigadier-general at twenty-three, and worn also by his troops after that event. This photograph shows Custer at the age of twenty-five.

# GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER

BY

FREDERICK S. DELLENBAUGH

"Their noonday never knows  
What names immortal are;  
'T is night alone that shows  
How star surpasseth star."

JOHN B. TASS.

New York

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1917

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## PREFACE

WERE I reading of one unknown to me, I should close this book with the thought that it was the fairest and frankest story of an intrepid soldier that his greatest admirers might demand.

General Custer's victories in the Civil War are commended without exaggeration, his Indian campaigns described by one who perfectly understood the difficulties to be overcome and therefore could estimate at what cost success was attained.

So few do just what they want to do in this life. The author makes one know that he of whom he writes was one of that number.

General Custer was enthusiastic over his profession and entered upon his Indian campaigns commanding a few hundred men as buoyantly as when he had led thousands in the Civil War.

The responsibilities of the few leaders of the cavalry in the Army of the Potomac were very great. When sent on special expeditions, they often encountered the enemy at such a distance from the main command that it was as if they were a separate army; and it was impossible to

receive instructions from headquarters, report engagements, or apply for reinforcements.

Sometimes the orders in leaving were short and verbal instead of long, formal, written documents, as is usual.

I remember one of General Custer's orders in starting on a long raid in Virginia, after he had won the confidence of his commanding officer by many successes. There were only six words in General Sheridan's forceful order: "Custer, go in and give them . . ." well, something very pyrotechnic.

He was thus at liberty to work out his own idea of the inferno, but he knew well that his conception quite corresponded to that of his chief.

But these raids were a great undertaking for those who were little more than boys, for they were answerable for so much. They lost every ounce of superfluous flesh and deep lines were carved in their faces.

The excellent likeness of General Custer shown in the frontispiece by Brady, the war photographer, taken after hard campaigns, looks more like a man of forty than one of twenty-four.

Even in the short pauses of those awful days of bloodshed in the Civil War, the General and his staff after an engagement begged to forget war temporarily and became rollicking, fun-loving lads.